

HON. JIM WRIGHT 1922–2015

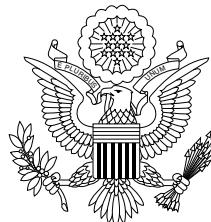


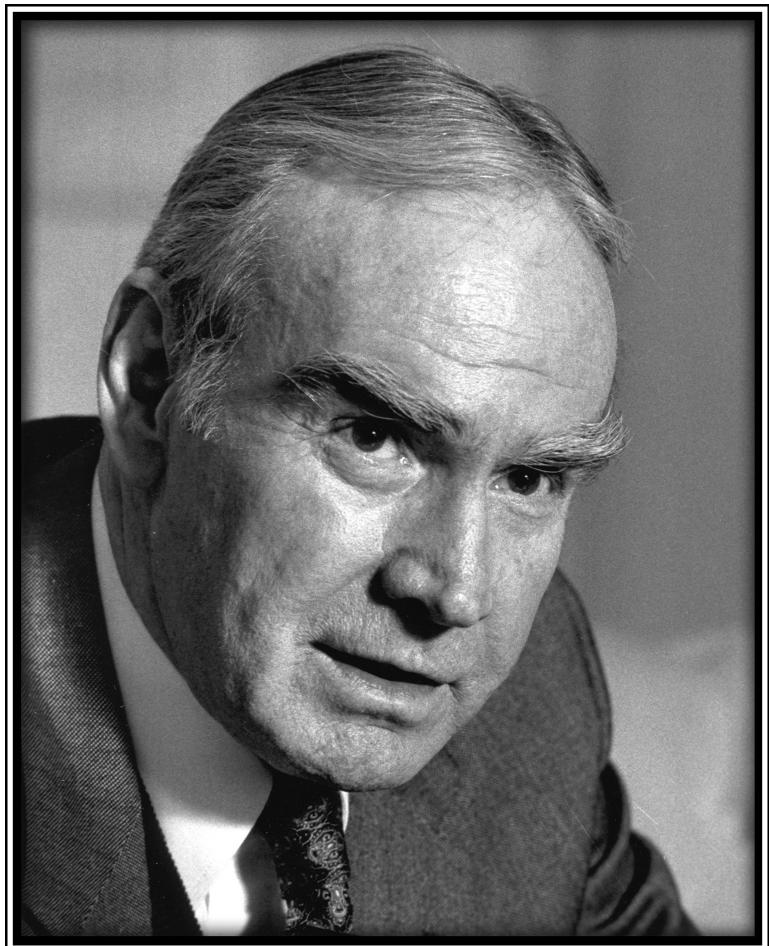
# Jim Wright

LATE A SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
AND A  
REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES AND  
OTHER TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF  
THE UNITED STATES





Jim Wright

# Memorial Addresses and Other Tributes

HELD IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
TOGETHER WITH A MEMORIAL SERVICE  
IN HONOR OF

## JIM WRIGHT

*Late a Speaker of the House  
and a  
Representative from Texas*



One Hundred Fourteenth Congress  
First Session



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## BIOGRAPHY

The insights gained by Speaker JIM WRIGHT in his long and tumultuous career can shed light on many of the problems we face in the world today. A Member of Congress for 34 years, Mr. WRIGHT served with eight American Presidents. He was chosen by his colleagues as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, the highest honor Members can bestow upon one of their number. He met and came to know many heads of state including Mikhail Gorbachev and several of the current leaders of Middle Eastern nations.

As majority leader, Mr. WRIGHT helped President Carter achieve the historic peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. He was the principal advocate in Congress for an energy policy to reduce our Nation's dependence on Middle Eastern oil.

As House Speaker, Mr. WRIGHT presided over the historic 100th Congress, considered the most productive in a generation. Under his leadership, Congress passed landmark legislation on such major issues as shelter for the homeless, catastrophic medical assistance for the elderly, safer highways and bridges, fast-track trade negotiating authority and U.S. competitiveness, quality education, clean water, and affordable housing. That 100th Congress fashioned the beginnings of an effective war on drugs and passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 as a step to addressing the wrongs done to Japanese-Americans in World War II.

JIM WRIGHT was born in Fort Worth, TX, a city he represented in Congress from 1955 through June 1989. He completed public school in 10 years and was on his way to finishing college within 3 years when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Following enlistment in the Army Air Corps, Mr. WRIGHT received his flyer's wings and a commission at 19. He flew combat missions in the South Pacific and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Legion of Merit.

After the war, Mr. WRIGHT was elected to the Texas Legislature at 23. At 26, he became the youngest mayor in Texas when voters chose him to head their city government in Weatherford, his boyhood home.

Elected to Congress at 31, he served 18 consecutive terms and authored major legislation in the fields of foreign affairs, economic development, water conservation, aviation, education, and energy. Mr. WRIGHT received worldwide recognition for his efforts to bring peace to Central America.

JIM WRIGHT served 10 years as majority leader before being sworn in as Speaker on January 6, 1987. He was re-elected as Speaker in January 1989.

A prolific writer, he authored numerous books: "You and Your Congressman," "The Coming Water Famine," "Of Swords and Plowshares," "Reflections of a Public Man," "Worth It All: My War for Peace," and "Balance of Power: Presidents and Congress from the Era of McCarthy to the Age of Gingrich." He has also written articles for major magazines and newspapers.

Mr. WRIGHT also served as senior political consultant to American Income Life Insurance Company. He wrote a frequent newspaper column and occasionally appeared on network TV news programs. Speaker WRIGHT donated his papers and memorabilia to the Texas Christian University Library in Fort Worth, TX. He was also a distinguished lecturer at TCU where he taught a course entitled, "Congress and the Presidents."

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES

AND

OTHER TRIBUTES

FOR

JIM WRIGHT



## Proceedings in the House of Representatives

TUESDAY, May 12, 2015

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 254) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 254

*Resolved*, That the House has learned with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable JAMES CLAUDE WRIGHT, JR., former Member of the House for 18 terms and Speaker of the House of Representatives for the One Hundred and One Hundred First Congresses.

*Resolved*, That in the death of the Honorable JAMES CLAUDE WRIGHT, JR. the United States and the State of Texas have lost a valued and eminent public servant and citizen.

*Resolved*, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

*Resolved*, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pleasure to pay tribute to the life and legacy of former Speaker of the House JAMES “JIM” WRIGHT, who passed away on Wednesday, May 6, at the age of 92. Speaker WRIGHT served in Congress for more than three decades and left an indelible legacy as chairman of the House Public Works Committee. He was elected by his peers as Speaker in 1987.

JIM WRIGHT was born in Fort Worth, TX, the son of a traveling salesman. He was educated at Weatherford College and the University of Texas at Austin. JIM WRIGHT dedicated his life to serving the public. He bravely served in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying combat missions in the South Pacific. Subsequently, he was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1946. He served as mayor of Weatherford,

TX, from 1950 to 1954. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1954 and was reelected 16 times.

Speaker WRIGHT was a visionary who served the people of Fort Worth and this Nation well. He is deserving of this tribute. Because of his leadership, the House experienced one of its most prolific periods. Speaker WRIGHT demonstrated his skill as a political leader and master legislator by shepherding extraordinarily complex legislation through the House. He understood that the business of legislating and good politics required great skill in the art of compromise.

Speaker WRIGHT never backed down from a challenge, and even after leaving office, he continued to serve the public diligently. I was always able to consult with Speaker WRIGHT regarding difficult legislation, and he never failed to provide thoughtful and principled insight.

Our country has lost one of its finest statesmen, and I have lost a close personal friend whose wisdom, dignity, and knowledge of the legislative process was unquestionably enviable. He is among the most influential Speakers in the history of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, JIM WRIGHT is an unforgettable public servant and leader. A man fueled by passion and concern for others, he set the bar high for his successors. He is survived by his wife, Betty, and four children. I stand today to honor former Speaker of the House, JIM WRIGHT, and to thank him for his work in service to the people of Texas and throughout this great Nation. He left a powerful legacy that will live for generations.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.), under its previous order and pursuant to House Resolution 254, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, May 13, 2015, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable JAMES CLAUDE WRIGHT, JR.

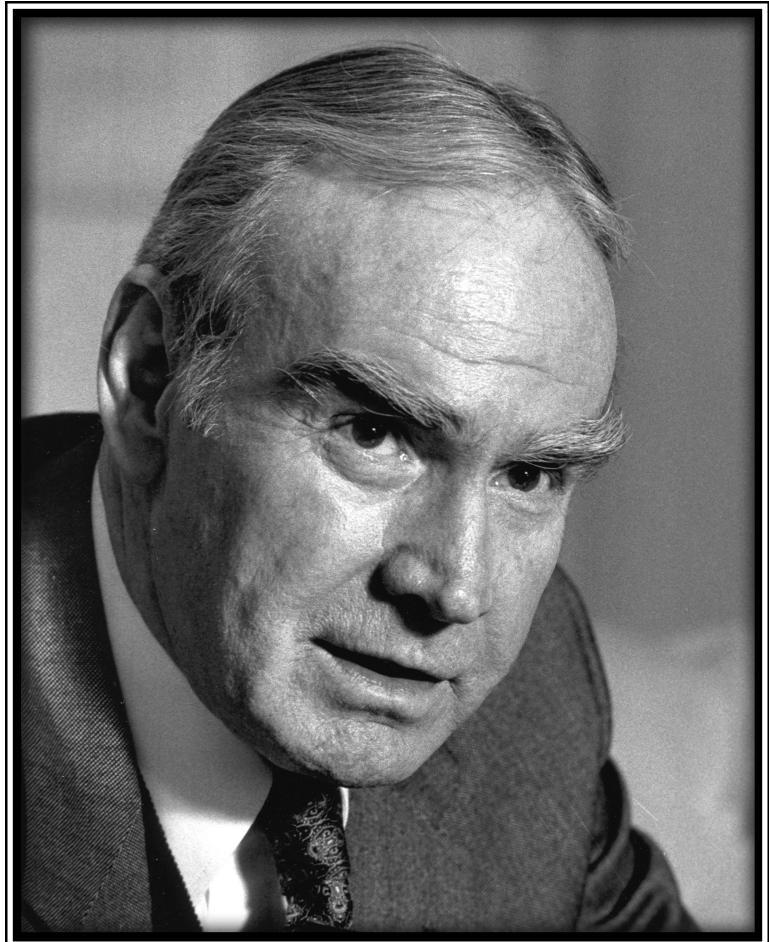
WEDNESDAY, *May 13, 2015*

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, the Honorable JAMES CLAUDE WRIGHT, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, died on May 6, 2015. On that day, I issued the following statement:

The whole House mourns the passing of Speaker JIM WRIGHT of the State of Texas. We remember Speaker WRIGHT today for his lifelong commitment to public service, from flying combat missions over the South Pacific to fighting for Fort Worth on the House floor. Speaker WRIGHT understood as well as anyone this institution's closeness to the people, calling the House "the raw essence of the Nation." It is in this spirit that we send our deepest condolences to his family and community.

The House took several steps to honor the former Speaker. The Speaker's chair on the rostrum was draped in black—the same mark of respect first made upon the death of Michael Kerr of Indiana, Speaker of the House in the 44th Congress, and most recently for Thomas Foley. The Speaker's gavel rested on the rostrum during this period. Outside the House Chamber, Speaker WRIGHT's official portrait in the Speaker's lobby was draped in black. A book of condolences was made available for the remembrances of friends and colleagues. On May 12, 2015, the House adopted House Resolution 245, expressing the condolences of the House upon his death, and the House adjourned on that day as a further mark of respect to his memory. A funeral was held on May 11, 2015, at First United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, TX. The following is a transcript of those proceedings: [The transcript may be found on page 11].





S P E A K E R   J I M   W R I G H T

D E C E M B E R   2 2,   1 9 2 2 – M A Y   6,   2 0 1 5

A Service of Thanksgiving to God for the Life and Legacy of  
**JAMES CLAUDE WRIGHT, JR.**  
DECEMBER 22, 1922–MAY 6, 2015

PRELUDE	Ms. Peggy Graff
PROCESSIONAL	“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”
CALL TO WORSHIP	Dr. Tim Bruster
PRAYER	
PSALM 23 (In Unison)	
	The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
HEBREW SCRIPTURES	Psalm 46 Micah 6:6–8
SOLO	Mr. Christopher Auchter “Let There Be Peace on Earth”
TRIBUTES	Mr. Martin Frost Mr. Bill Alexander Mr. Paul Driskell
CONGREGATIONAL HYMN	No. 437 “This is My Song”
NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES	I Corinthians 13 Luke 6:27–36
SERMON	
PRAYER	
BENEDICTION	JIM's Great Grandchildren

CONGREGATIONAL

HYMN                    "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder"

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound,  
and time shall be no more,  
And the morning breaks, eternal, bright and fair;  
When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other  
shore,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

*Refrain:*

When the roll is called up yonder,  
When the roll is called up yonder,  
When the roll is called up yonder,  
When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

On that bright and cloudless morning  
when the dead in Christ shall rise,  
And the glory of His resurrection share;  
When His chosen ones shall gather to their home be-  
yond the skies,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

*Refrain*

Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting  
sun,  
Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care;  
Then when all of life is over, and our work on earth  
is done,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

*Refrain*

RECESSATIONAL

"For All the Saints"

Please join the family for a reception in Wesley Hall  
immediately following the service.



The funeral procession will depart at 4:00 for the  
interment at City Greenwood Cemetery in  
Weatherford. If you are planning to join the  
procession and are parked at Farrington Field,  
please take the shuttle to the parking area  
and return to the church for the procession.

**The Reverend Dr. Tim Bruster** (First United Methodist Church, Fort Worth, Texas). Please be seated.

Hear these words of Jesus: I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everybody who lives and believes in me will never die.

Christ said, "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last and the living one. I was dead, and now I am alive, forever and ever.

Friends, we have gathered here to praise God and to draw comfort from our faith and to give thanks as we celebrate the life of **JIM WRIGHT**.

We come together in grief, of course, acknowledging our human loss. But we also come together in gratitude, acknowledging and giving thanks for his life and his legacy and for everything in his life that was a reflection of the love and the grace of God.

May God grant us grace in this time that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow we may find joy, and in death, resurrection.

Let us pray.

Our gracious and loving God, we bow in awe of Your greatness and Your love. You have spoken words of life to us in so many ways. You've given form and beauty to our world, and all of creation sings Your praise.

You have given us one another to love and receive love, a reflection of Your gracious love for us. And You have spoken to us in the words of Scripture and in Jesus, the Word made flesh, the Author of life.

As You speak to us now, in this service of worship, help us once again to hear Your words of life as we celebrate the life and legacy of Your servant, **JIM**.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

I invite you now to turn in your worship guide to the words of the 23d Psalm as we say them together:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

"He restorest my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

The words of Psalm 46:

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the Earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; He utters His voice, the Earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

“Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations He has brought on the Earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the Earth; He breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; He burns the shields with fire. ‘Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the Earth.’ The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

The words of the prophet Micah:

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

God speaks to us in the reading of Scripture.

**The Honorable Martin Frost** (U.S. House of Representatives, 24th District of Texas, 1979–2005). In the words of President John F. Kennedy about JIM WRIGHT, “No city in America was better represented in Congress than Fort Worth.”

I’m here today to speak on behalf of the scores of people—many of whom, Texans—that JIM WRIGHT helped along the way with their careers. He was our mentor, our colleague, and our friend. We were better public servants because of JIM WRIGHT, and many of those Members, past and present,

Democrat and Republican, are here with us today to honor JIM.

In a minute, I'm going to speak about what JIM did for my career, but it really speaks volumes for what he did for a lot of others, too.

JIM WRIGHT was an extraordinary leader both for the people of Fort Worth and for our Nation. He always remembered the people who sent him to Washington and worked tirelessly to make our country even better every day he was in office. Few Congressmen in recent times have had a greater impact than our friend JIM WRIGHT.

I met JIM WRIGHT 57 years ago, in 1958, when he was a young Congressman beginning his second term and I was a 16 year old. JIM was the guest speaker at the Temple Beth-El youth group in the basement of the old synagogue building on West Broadway, near downtown.

I had never met a national politician before, and he made a deep impression on me that day. I remember to this day some of what he said, and more of that a little bit later.

Seven years later, in 1965, I showed up in Washington as a young reporter covering Congress for a magazine, and the first thing I did was to go see my hometown Congressman, JIM WRIGHT. JIM and his chief of staff, Marshall Lynam, were very helpful to this young reporter, suggesting who I should get to know on congressional committee staffs. Three years later, in summer 1968, JIM helped me get a job on Hubert Humphrey's national Presidential campaign staff while I was a student at Georgetown Law School.

The last two people I saw before I headed back to Texas following graduation in 1970 were JIM and Marshall. I told them that I hoped to come back to DC some day as a Congressman—in a neighboring district. I had no intention of ever running against JIM WRIGHT.

Fast forward to 1976 when I was north Texas coordinator for the Carter-Mondale Presidential campaign. The Carter campaign wanted to come to Texas the weekend before the general election when carrying Texas was still in doubt. They wanted to only stop in Dallas. As a Fort Worth boy, I told them they also had to come to Cowtown and that I knew that local Congressman JIM WRIGHT would put on one hell of a show for them, and that's exactly what JIM did. He filled the downtown convention center with more than 10,000 people early in the afternoon that Sunday. It made great television, and Carter became the last Democratic Presidential candidate to carry Texas.

Shortly after that election, JIM WRIGHT became House majority leader by one vote in a hotly contested secret ballot election. He certainly knew how to count.

Two years later, I was elected to Congress from the 24th District, which, in fact, adjoined the 12th District that JIM represented. JIM went to Speaker Tip O'Neill and made sure I was named to the powerful House Rules Committee, an appointment that almost never went to a freshman Member.

From that day on, JIM WRIGHT and I became both colleagues and friends. He was my mentor during the 11 years we served together, and I learned an enormous amount just watching him in action. When I inherited the Black community in southeast Fort Worth following the 1991 redistricting, I only used one picture in my mailing: a photo of JIM WRIGHT and me. There wasn't anything else the voters in that part of my district needed to know.

They continued to be my base for the remainder of my 26 years in Congress, and just to make sure people in Fort Worth knew that I had strong ties to Fort Worth, even though I now lived in Dallas, he used to tell anyone who would listen that I went to high school in his district at Fort Worth's Paschal, and he went to high school in my district at Dallas' Adamson.

When JIM taught a course at TCU on Congress for 20 years after leaving the Congress, I was proud to be a guest lecturer for him every single year. The last time I saw JIM was in spring 2014, when I was working on a book about Congress. We visited for about an hour in his office at TCU. His body was frail, but his mind was as sharp as ever.

I learned how to be an effective Congressman by observing JIM as a colleague and as a junior partner on a variety of matters that helped Fort Worth. He never forgot the people who sent him to Washington. He was a stalwart in his work on behalf of defense workers at what is now Lockheed Martin, which was General Dynamics, and Bell Helicopter in Fort Worth.

He played a significant role in the decision by American Airlines to move its corporate headquarters from New York to the Metroplex, and he was a strong supporter of DFW Airport, the jobs magnet for this part of the State.

We worked together—and by the way, he did the heavy lifting—to convince the railroad to make its right-of-way available for the Trinity River Express connecting Fort Worth and Dallas. No request from anyone in Tarrant County was too small to win JIM's help.

Also, JIM's role in promoting the careers of promising African Americans from Fort Worth was of great significance. He brought Lorraine Miller, a young woman from the southeast side of Fort Worth, to Washington to work on his staff. Years later, she became the first African American to serve as Clerk of the U.S. House and recently served as interim national president of the NAACP. Just a few years ago, JIM played a key role in the election of Mark Veasey, who became the first Black Congressman from Fort Worth.

One of JIM's greatest strengths was molding a disparate group of Democrats into an effective majority when he became Speaker. During his first year as Speaker in 1987—and Tony and Steny, you will remember this—Congress passed all 13 appropriation bills before the start of the new fiscal year on October 1, something that is almost never done today.

I remember his response to a question from the audience at that speech at Temple Beth-El in 1958. He was asked what a Congressman does when he feels one way about an issue and his district feels the other way. He responded that the job of a Congressman was to reflect the views of his district as often as he could. He then added that he reserved a small percentage of votes, perhaps 10 percent, to vote against the majority of his district if he felt something was vital in the national interest. He then added that it was his responsibility to go back to his constituents to explain his vote and hopefully convince them that he was right and they were wrong. He added that if a Congressman couldn't successfully do that, he wouldn't be reelected, and that was as it should be.

He did a very good job following his own advice. I did the same and found that he was exactly correct.

Fort Worth is a great city today because of JIM WRIGHT. We all owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. We will never see his like again.

**The Honorable Bill Alexander** (U.S. House of Representatives, First District of Arkansas, 1969–1993). Jimmy and Ginger, Kerry, Lisa, and all the Wright family, I feel that we are kin.

To all of his friends who are here today, I join you in tribute to one of my dearest friends.

I kept up with JIM through the years, even after he left Washington and returned to Texas; and following his recovery from surgery, I gave him a call one day, and he invited me to come to Fort Worth. So my son and I—Alex, who is

here—with his sister Ashley, who came to TCU at a later time, boarded our plane and came to DFW. At those days, JIM was driving, and so he met us at the airport. I'd never been outside of DFW before, so I didn't know what to expect.

As we left the terminal, I noticed all of the concrete infrastructure that supports the airport: the entrance ramps, the exit ramps, the overhead bridges, the long ride to the interstate. I never saw so much concrete in all my life. I turned to JIM, who at one time, as most of you know, was chairman of the Public Works Committee, and I said to him, "JIM, how much money did the Public Works Committee spend on this airport?" He looked at me and rolled his brow and lifted his big bushy eyebrows and he said to me, "Not a penny more than the law allowed."

JIM was probably one of the most successful chairmen in Congress; and with that success, people encouraged him, and he ran for majority leader. As all of you probably followed in the news, it was a very contentious race, and on the day of the vote, I was appointed to be a judge. So after the votes were cast, I adjourned with the other members of the election group and counted the votes. We counted them twice, and JIM won by one vote.

I got up from the chair in the Speaker's lounge—the Speaker's lobby, we call it—rushed through the door to the House Chamber, and JIM was sitting on the second row on the Democratic side in the Hall of the House. I rushed up to him and I said, "JIM, you won." He was surprised because no one knew the outcome of that election. He looked at me, and he said, "Are you sure?" I said, "JIM, I counted the votes, and if you hadn't won, Phil Burton said he would send me to Alaska."

Following in the footsteps of Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson, JIM asserted leadership in Congress at a time of confusion in the Senate and the White House, demonstrating a unique ability to command our Nation's political resources to get things done. This went across the aisle to the Republicans and even down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House, which is a million miles away if you serve in Congress sometimes.

JIM WRIGHT had fought in World War II to defend the values of the Greatest Generation, as Tom Brokaw describes this generation, a generation of men and women united in common purposes of family, country, duty, honor, courage, and service. During World War II, he flew many combat missions. I haven't really been able to discern exactly how many

yet because there's such a debate over it. Maybe somebody will tell me before I go back to Washington. He served as a bombardier and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his bravery.

JIM believed that government should serve the people as well as the economic interests, which also must be represented, and provide Federal assistance to communities and States like Arkansas, where I'm from. It's in need of capital development in order to provide infrastructure to try to attract industry and jobs for our people. That was, in his view, providing building blocks for the foundation of the economic development that benefits all of us. All you've got to do is look around in Texas a little bit to find out if it works.

The criticism of Speaker WRIGHT, which is in the news, instead of all of the accomplishments that we know he achieved, his strong leadership came from a changing Congress. Some of my former colleagues from Congress are here today, and they know what I'm talking about.

Beginning with the 1968 election, which was my first election to Congress, the ideals and values of the Greatest Generation began to evolve. A Congress run by Southern Democrats, who chaired mostly the important committees in the Congress, was gradually replaced by a younger generation of Congressmen and Senators, many of them in the other party. When he left Congress, even his political enemies often remarked that, had he stayed in Congress, he would have been the greatest Speaker since Henry Clay.

His time as Speaker laid down historic markers. He was the last great figure in Congress to keep alive the idea of development—that came from the New Deal—that would help our economy.

After him came what we call Reaganomics and the tidal wave of polarization of our two political parties and the continuing mindless cannibalism which we can still see evident today between the parties and even in the parties in Congress.

Criticism of Speaker WRIGHT's forceful leadership came from Republicans and Democrats alike; although, at the time he stepped down, the principal antagonists came from within our own party. I was there, and I know who they are.

What followed was a profound change in the power structure in Congress, shifting away from the power and authority lodged in a handful of key Southern committee chairmen to a dispersion of power among proliferating committees and subcommittees, encouraging intensifying rivalries and even

political fraticides throughout the House. His departure marked the end of an era when Southern Democrats dominated in both the House and the Senate, along with a gradual evolution of the Congress toward social issues.

It marked the transition from Southern leadership of Congress to a growing concentration of power of the Democratic Party in our Nation's biggest cities, many of them in the North, opening a widening rift between our Nation's small towns and rural areas and the political interests of the inner cities. The way was opened for lobbyists to shift attention away from schools and roads and bridges and water systems that helped our people to special interests of Wall Street banks and a commercial agenda.

A fluent speaker of Spanish, he took the initiative to intervene in the political crisis in Nicaragua and crafted peace talks that laid the foundation for elections. When I assisted him in this so-called "junket," in his endeavor I found that what we tried to do generated much consternation among President Reagan's White House staff. Later, another great Texan, James Baker, observed that what **JIM WRIGHT** did with his intervention in Nicaragua turned the corner for that nation and helped the United States and Nicaragua to come to better terms with one another.

**JIM WRIGHT** was not only a master of the political structure and the rules in Congress, he also was an author, a professor. He lectured at Texas Christian University with eagerness to inspire and guide our Nation's youth.

In the tradition of Sam Houston and Sam Rayburn, **JIM WRIGHT** was a giant. I was his chief deputy whip in the Congress, the worst job in the House of Representatives, but it was worth all the knocks and the cuts and the bruises and the criticism that I endured to fight for the values established by the Greatest Generation until the ideals were changed by a new breed of voter who believes that Washington is not a solution, rather, Washington is the problem.

He was my dear friend, and I stood with him in every fight for the values that won World War II and provided the building blocks and foundation for the greatest economy on Earth.

God bless **JIM WRIGHT**.

**Paul Driskell** (Special Assistant, Majority Leader **JIM WRIGHT**). Martin, Bill, Betsy, Mike, Kenneth, Mr. Leader, Steny Hoyer—the one man in this sanctuary today who knows the full weight and measure and the responsibilities of the job this prince of peace executed so beautifully for so many years. Dear Steny, thank you for your presence today.

How very special, how honored he would be, how much he would love this congregation today. This is a delegation of community builders.

Mr. WRIGHT loved Sam Rayburn dearly, and he often quoted him; and of course many people wondered why Mr. Rayburn went back to Bonham, TX, after announcing he was going to leave the House, and Rayburn's answer was simple, "Bonham is a place where people know it when you're sick, and where they care when you die."

You have validated JIM WRIGHT's recitation of that quote, all of you today, by honoring him in coming here. You knew he was ill, and you cared that he died. How he would celebrate you. How he must be enjoying this. He loved people of accomplishment. He loved people who contributed and built.

Mr. Rayburn used to always say, "A jackass can kick a barn down; it takes a carpenter to build one." It's no accident that our Lord was fathered by a carpenter—and parented by a carpenter in his early years.

I'd like to give you a sense of Speaker WRIGHT, JIM WRIGHT, and my friend. It may be unique. As I have thought about him so much and as I visited him in those final days, things came to me that I would have never imagined. He was, in fact, the first gifted multitasker. Now, if you know anything about JIM, he despised anything to do with technology, but he was a multitasker. Let me explain what I mean.

February 7, 1985, after about 30 days, some of the people in this room—Tony, John—had been working diligently because Mr. O'Neill had told us privately he was going to retire. So we were trying to collect the requisite number of votes for him to become Speaker of the House 2 years out.

February 7, 1985, 11 o'clock in the morning, a national press conference was held in the office that Steny Hoyer's offices are in today. He met the national press. He was surrounded by his colleagues. He was surrounded by people who loved him and wished well for him, and he made the announcement that he had achieved the requisite number of votes to capture his dream, to be Speaker of the House. He put at peace, if you will, a body that's not given to peace easily about the next years and how things would follow.

Fifteen minutes later, he grabbed me by the arm and escorted me and my wife, Donna, up the back stairs with 31 other people to the House Chaplain's office where Chaplain Ford married us at Henry Clay's desk, the Great Compromiser. Then, he walked back downstairs with us. We had

a reception in the office. He pulled Donna and me aside and he said, "I only have two things to tell you two: Paul, always hold her hand, and never go to bed mad."

Mr. Speaker, sometimes you set the bar too high. I have removed pillows from my bed so as not to elevate the temptation for Donna to smother me.

There are so many things privately that I loved about him and that we shared. He had a passionate love for boxing. He knew boxing like Nat Fleischer, the famous author who recorded almost everything of significance about American heavyweight boxing. We went to a fight. We went to Golden Gloves. We went to the Olympic trials. We went to tons of professional fights. It was like going to that fight with Nat Fleischer, and he would be sitting there and he would be reciting to you the ring scores of the Firpo-Dempsey fight. He knew every hobby and interest he had, he wanted to know everything there was to know about it. If you ever saw the roses that he cultivated, you'd understand that in spades. He was a gifted horticulturist. He was a great teacher.

Kay, you and I sat just about where Steny was sitting 2 years ago, 2½ years ago, and you told me how he taught you and Ginger, Jenny, and Lisa about God. In fact, he used a wagon wheel and said that was the universe and God was, indeed, the hub; and the spokes represented the people, and, of course, the rim, where all the damage and impact takes place, was the furthest from God. He admonished you that it was your job, it was your responsibility, it was a testament of your faith to move closer down those spokes because you would be closer to more people, and as you were closer to more people, you'd be closer to God. What a gift.

I've often wondered, and I think everyone in this sanctuary today wonders, why God lets us see certain things at certain times. It seems rather odd. Last week, just the day before his passing and only a few days after my last visit with him, there was a documentary on about George Foreman. I happened to turn it on the other night. George Foreman, the famous heavyweight, struck fear and terror in everyone's heart—undefeated, knocked poor Joe Frazier down eight times. The interviewer asked him a question. He said, "Who was the greatest champion of all time in your estimation?" George Foreman didn't hesitate. He said, "Muhammad Ali." That stunned the interviewer.

Muhammad Ali had defeated George Foreman in Zaire, Africa, and usually when a boxer loses to another one, it was a lucky punch or you're just a little better that night, not the

greatest champion that ever lived. He didn't hesitate. He said, "Muhammad Ali."

The interviewer said, "Why? Why do you choose him?" He said, "Well, if you saw the fight in the eighth round, he hit me twice in the face." If any of you remember or happened to have seen it, George Foreman began to cartwheel. He began to turn and fall to the floor. As he was falling, Muhammad Ali, as all boxers are trained all their life to do, cocked his arm to hit him with what is known as the "killing punch."

George Foreman said, "I looked up out of my left eye, just partially conscious, knowing I was going to the floor, and he never threw that punch. So for me, he's not the greatest champion that ever lived for the punches he threw; it's for what he didn't do. It's the punch he didn't throw."

The very people who besmirched and impugned this prince of peace at the end of his public career, when they fell on hard times and they fell by the sword they had so recklessly wielded, not once in private—and certainly never in public—did JIM WRIGHT throw that punch. He could not retaliate. He didn't just talk Christian forgiveness; he lived it. His higher calling at that time was to find a way to inspire students at TCU to engage in public service and to think about the possibilities of what they could build, like the beautiful people in this room today. He didn't throw that punch.

I was 15 years old, standing in front of a black and white television, and I watched Robert Kennedy say, "When he shall die, take him and cut him out into stars, and he shall make the face of Heaven so fine that all the world will be in love with night and pay no worship to the garish Sun."

I didn't know at 15 just what that meant. At 65, I marvel how Bobby Kennedy could have mustered the strength and the insight to say that about the brother he loved, in some ways his best friend, and, oh, by the way, in passing, the President of the United States.

I understood because of this church and because of my association with him that all of us have a spark of divinity. We are all made in God's image, and that spark is there, but what I didn't understand was that there are a special few who possess a flame, a torch. It's bigger. It's more committed. It's something we can appreciate. It's not necessarily something we readily understand.

It's not by accident that there's an eternal flame that burns at John Kennedy's grave and why, for all the accomplishments: the Peace Corps, the space program, all of those

things—no. That's part of it. That's why millions go there to pay respects. The part of it is that during the most sensitive time in our Nation's history, when we were the closest to engaging in a nuclear holocaust, when every adviser that that President had was admonishing him to take advantage of the tactical and strategic position we occupied for those precious few days and strike Cuba with nuclear weapons, he didn't throw that punch. We're all breathing good air and loving our friends and conducting our lives because of that divine torch.

The thing I think I will miss most is a private passion that JIM had and I shared. He loved movies. The singular thing that we really appreciated together was we happened to think that Robert Duvall was the greatest American actor that's ever lived.

JIM's favorite movie was "Tender Mercies," and my favorite film was "The Natural." In "The Natural," there's a scene—of course, all the ladies in here know Robert Redford was the natural. He was Roy Hobbs, the gifted baseball player. Robert Duvall was the cynical sportswriter; Wilford Brimley was the crusty old coach.

There's that beautiful soliloquy where the coach walks in and he says—I mean, pardon me, Robert Duvall walks in and says to the coach, "Coach, who is this Roy Hobbs?" The coach turns on his heels and says, "I don't know who Roy Hobbs is. I just know he's the best there is and the best there ever will be."

JIM WRIGHT, you are the "Natural."

There probably has never been a man in American history who I can recall that so eloquently used the English language. He helped those of us who only have sparks appreciate the flame with his application of our language.

It seems a shame that I can't find words in my language to encompass all that he was, and yet he will always be. Only in Spanish: Vaya con Dios—go and be with God. Light of our land. Vaya con Dios, friend of my life.

**Reverend Bruster.** I invite you to hear now the words of the Apostle Paul from the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13:

"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all

my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

“Love never ends.”

Paul ends that chapter with the words, “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

The words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, a sermon on the plain:

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

JIM had a wonderful, quick wit as we all know. His responses to glowing introductions illustrated that point. Two years ago, when Cissy Day was introducing him to a Sunday school class where he was about to speak, she told a story at the end of her introduction of something that he had done that was very kind and a note that he had written to her that was a kind note that she treasured. When he stood up then to speak, he looked over at her and he said, “I had forgotten how nice I used to be.”

After a glowing introduction at another event, he said, “An event of this dimension is just terribly hard on one’s humility. Try as I might to look and sound humble, I just can’t quite pull it off.”

Then he quoted Jesus: "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven."

He said, "You know, when I read that, I realized he doesn't say, 'Let your light so shine so that others may see your good works and think what a great guy.'" Then he went on to say, "The purpose of good works is not to get bragged on." Then he said this, "But if I'm honest with you, I guess I'm going to have to let you in on a little personal confession. Being bragged on, I like it. I eat it up."

On another occasion, he said after an introduction, "Undeserved as though an introduction like that is, indeed I want you to know that I liked it. I liked every word of it."

Then he said, "There are two kinds of people who appreciate flattery: men and women."

So since JIM made that confession, I guess it's OK that we tell of his good works and that we laud him. I hope that he would appreciate that we do it not just pointing at JIM, but pointing at the source of all of that for JIM; pointing not just to JIM, but beyond to the legacy that he received from other people, and beyond JIM to his faith and his commitment to Christ that guided his life.

He leaves a great legacy, and our words hold up those great attributes not to point just to JIM, but to also point to his faith and commitment and the One in whom he had faith and the One that he sought to follow, and also to see JIM's life as an example to all of us.

I want to think about that with you for just a few minutes. JIM was an encourager. As he sought to be a follower of Christ and as he put that into practice in his life, he knew the importance of encouragement. He was an encourager.

In the Book of Acts, we meet a man named Joseph. He was from Cyprus. But we don't know him as Joseph. We almost never hear that. After his first introduction in the Book of Acts, he's known by his nickname, and his nickname was Barnabas. The disciples, the apostles, nicknamed him Barnabas because Barnabas means "son of encouragement." He was an encourager. Imagine having your nickname mean one who encourages. We could call JIM that, a Barnabas, because he was. He was a son of encouragement.

How many of us in this room, I wonder, have, in our possession, notes of encouragement from JIM WRIGHT? I would guess a lot of us. Those notes arrived at a time of discouragement, perhaps, or a time of grief or a time of uncertainty or

a time of failing confidence or a time of waning courage. A note of encouragement arrived at just the right time.

What is the value of those notes? I was thinking about that and thought, the law of supply and demand would say those notes are not worth anything at all; there are too many of them on the market. But the value of those notes goes far beyond that. They're valued in a different way. One person told me that she had such a note in a plastic sleeve and carried it with her for a long time.

What an encourager, not just the notes, but the right words spoken at the right moment.

We give thanks to God for JIM because JIM was a peacemaker, and we have heard our speakers talk eloquently about his peacemaking efforts. He often quoted Jesus, again, from the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

He was a peacemaker. He was a man of strong convictions but yet able to see and to respect the perspective of another and to bring people together in ways that make for peace. He was, as a peacemaker, a child of God, as Jesus said.

Now, peacemaking extended beyond what you may know about to his role as a parent. His daughters, Ginger and Kay, were fighting one time as sisters do, and JIM intervened as the peacemaker. He made each one of them go to her room and write an essay, entitled, "Why I Love My Sister." He held on to those essays for 30 years, and then he gave them back to the girls so they could read them.

Kay wrote this: "Well, I suppose she's nice. Her friends seem to like her."

Ginger wrote: "Well, she seems to like my clothes because she wears them all the time."

He closed the door after reading those essays and guffawed, as you can imagine.

Ginger's comment, when she was telling me about it, was, "And he thought the Sandinistas and Contras were tough."

JIM was a servant leader; we know that. His accomplishments were many. In serving his beloved Weatherford and his beloved Fort Worth and his beloved Nation, he was a servant leader. Whether that was as a father, a grandfather, a great-grandfather, a soldier, a State legislator, a Scoutmaster, a Golden Gloves boxing coach, a Sunday school teacher, a church leader, a mayor, a Congressman, a majority leader, a Speaker of the House, a teacher, or a friend, he was a servant leader—again, following the words of Jesus

that we are to be servants of one another if we're ever to be called great.

His life was committed to compassion and justice. I read those wonderful words from Micah a moment ago. Micah was writing to a nation, to his people, who had lost their way, who had lost sight of that which was most important. They had the right words. They had the right rituals. But Micah wrote that that was all empty and reminded them of what was most important that they should have known already.

He said, "What has he told you, O mortal, but what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

On so many occasions, I saw JIM share his faith; I saw JIM share his values, heard him speak in this pulpit. A number of years ago—I think it was in 2006—my wife, Susan, who was working at William James Middle School as an academic coordinator, shared that with JIM, and he said, "I used to go to William James Middle School." She invited him then to come and speak to the students, and she had Jim Wright Day, and he spent most of the day at the school. He talked with those students, and he had a reception in the library where he shared with them.

There was a big assembly in the auditorium, and it's one of those old classic schools with a big auditorium, a balcony in the back, and it was packed with middle school kids. I couldn't believe my eyes and my ears when he spoke to them. You could hear a pin drop. He was a master.

He shared with those kids the story of the Good Samaritan. I remember how he started into that. He said, "There are a lot of different beliefs." He said, "There is a man who lived a long time ago. His name was Jesus. He was a very good man, and a lot of different people believed a lot of different things about him. But he told some stories that taught some important values, and everybody agrees on that."

He told the story of the Good Samaritan. You know the story. The man is beaten and robbed, lying on the side of the road. Along come two people who pass by on the other side, and then comes the Samaritan who is the outsider in the story, and he's the one who helps the man. I remember JIM said to those kids, "This illustrates really three philosophies of life, the three ways of approaching life."

He said, "There is the philosophy of the thieves, and their philosophy is what's yours is mine, and I'll take it." He said, "That philosophy still lives in attacking others and cheating

people and greedy business practices and being envious of others and whatever belittles or injures or degrades another person. It's not always physically violent. We rob others by slander or gossip when we injure their reputations."

He said, "The second philosophy is that of the two men who saw the wounded man but offered no help. Their central operating principle is what is mine is all mine, and I'll keep it for myself. That's less violent, but in its own way it's as selfish as the first." He said, "We can come up with all kinds of excuses to justify not helping those injured along life's highway. We deceive ourselves and ignore their suffering by saying that they're not our responsibility."

Then he said, "Then there's the Samaritan. This was Jesus' model for humanity. He was a stranger and a child of another religious heritage, but he extended himself freely to help one in need. His philosophy is what's mine is yours if you need it, and I'll share it with you."

Then he said, "Jesus told that story in answer to a question. The question was, 'Who is my neighbor?'" Then he told those kids, "There are these three philosophies of life, and there's only one that makes the world a better place. There's only one that makes your relationships better, and it's that of the Samaritan. And we each can choose how we live."

Now, that illustrates so much how JIM lived and how he wanted to pass on that legacy to those who came after him.

Much has been spoken about his ability to forgive, and I cannot but think, as we meditate on those words of Jesus, the words of Paul about love, Jesus' words about forgiveness, and I can't help but think of the quote that he often gave from Abraham Lincoln.

Someone once asked Lincoln if he believed in destroying his enemies, and Lincoln replied, "Of course, I would like to destroy my enemies because I've never wanted enemies. The only way I know satisfactorily to destroy an enemy is to convert him to a friend."

The Fetzer Institute has done a lot of research on forgiveness, and they define it in a way that I think is so meaningful, and that is, forgiveness is the difficult, intentional process of letting go of an old reality and opening up one's self to a new one. JIM lived that difficult, intentional process of being able to let go of an old reality and opening up and living a new one.

One friend emailed me and said, "He was the poster child for amazing grace."

That's the legacy that we celebrate today, and there's so much more that could be said. The challenge for all of us today was how do we winnow it down. But you know what? You carry those stories of JIM; you carry those memories; you carry that legacy. Share it; share it with one another; and do your best. Let us all do our best to live it.

In the obituary that you were handed as you came in, there is a favorite quote of his from Horace Greeley, "Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wings, those who cheer today may curse tomorrow. Only one thing endures—character."

Well done, JIM WRIGHT, good and faithful servant.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we give You thanks for the hope that faith in You gives. For all Your people who have laid hold on that hope, especially we thank You for Your faithful servant JIM WRIGHT. We thank You for all Your goodness to him and for everything in his life that was a reflection of Your love and Your grace. We give You thanks for his faith, for his love for and his commitment to You and to his family and to his friends, to his Nation.

We give You thanks for his kindness, his passion for justice, his courage, and his strength of character. Loving God, hold us and all who mourn in Your love, and comfort this loving family and comfort us, his friends. Help us all to be ever mindful of Your sustaining presence.

We offer a prayer in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

In just a few moments, the family will process out, and you're invited to Wesley Hall, which is across the garden in that adjacent part of the building, for a reception with the family. Please note the instructions that are on the back of your bulletin, and I invite you to please remain seated, if you will, until the ushers direct you.

Ginger shared with me one of her favorite memories of the opening of the Presidential display, the new Presidential display in the early 1990s, a room turned into a replica of LBJ's office there in Austin. There was an antique pump organ there signed by all the Members of Congress, and Jake Pickle sat down at the organ and started playing a hymn. The Congressional Members and former Members there started singing the hymn, and it's the hymn that we're going to sing in just a moment after JIM's great-grandchildren give us our benediction.

A benediction isn't really a prayer. It can be a prayer of course, but traditionally, it is not. The word "benediction" literally means "a good word." The great-grandchildren, led by the oldest, Campbell, will give us their good word.

Will you come now.

**Campbell Brown** (JIM WRIGHT's great-granddaughter, accompanied by JIM WRIGHT's great-grandchildren). Hi, my name is Campbell Brown. Everyone on stage with me is a great-grandchild of JIM WRIGHT or, as we like to call him, "Great Pop."

None of us were born when he was in Congress, but we all knew his love for this great country, especially Fort Worth. We are told by many people that he often said, "I want to make the world a better place for my children, their children, and their children's children." Well, that's us. Next to me are the children of the grandchildren. We are the next generation.

We would like to ask you to honor our Great Pop for the rest of the day by thinking about how you can make the world a better place. As you walk out of the church and for the rest of today, think about peace, not war; think about abundance, not scarcity; think about love, not hate, and hope, not despair.

Please help us lift Great Pop to his next rollcall by singing the final hymn.

Thank y'all for coming today.

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